

Shenley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117150
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	367409
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Leopold
Headteacher	Emma Cole (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	17 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 19 lessons led by 12 different teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from staff and from 169 parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The strength of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 and whether current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their targets.
- The overall impact on pupils' behaviour of the new strategies employed.
- How well teachers ensure that there is challenge for all groups of pupils, particularly the most able.
- The role that teachers with particular responsibilities play in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

Shenley Primary is an above-average-sized school. A large majority of pupils live in the village though an increasing number travel from the surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy School status. The school has a breakfast and after-school club, 'Funky Kids' which is managed by the governing body and is included in this report. There is a Children's Centre adjacent to the site and this is subject to a separate inspection.

The headteacher left the school in December 2010 and currently the substantive deputy headteacher is the acting headteacher. A new substantive headteacher has been appointed and she will take up her post in September 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Shenley provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It does a number of things well but there are also areas of weakness. Its strengths lie primarily in its caring ethos and particularly for its support for pupils who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances. It has the support of parents and carers with most saying that overall they are happy with their children's experience at the school. Almost all say that the school keeps their children safe and that their children enjoy school. This is the case and with staff putting the pupils' health, safety and well-being at the heart of its provision, they ensure that the pupils do feel safe in school and that they are confident that adults will sort out any problems that they may have. The arrangements to protect and safeguard pupils are of good quality and all regulatory requirements are met. Even though pupils' behaviour is good in many classes and is invariably so in assemblies and around the school, behaviour is satisfactory overall. This is because a few pupils sometimes hamper the learning of others, particularly in the upper part of the school where there are a number of pupils with particular behavioural, emotional and social needs. This behaviour is not always managed well, because the school's well-founded policy for behaviour is not always consistently implemented throughout the school.

Children enter the Nursery classes with broadly expected skills and knowledge and they make satisfactory progress in both the Nursery and Reception years. Although some aspects of provision, such as the teaching of sounds and letters, is of good quality in the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff do not always make challenging interventions in the children's learning and this limits more rapid progress. The outdoor learning areas, particularly outside the Reception classes, are not always prepared well enough to support learning across all the required areas. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and attainment is consistently above average at the end of Year 2. Progress slows to satisfactory levels in Years 3 to 6 and, by the end of Year 6, attainment is average, though it is strengthening due to the good focus on accelerating learning. In English, progress is more rapid in reading than in writing. The school has recently developed a good programme to improve writing, but it is not yet having a full impact. In mathematics pupils' calculation skills are better than their problem solving. Teaching is satisfactory but rapidly improving. Where it is good all pupils are challenged well, including the more able, but this is not the case in every lesson.

The acting headteacher is admired by staff and parents and carers for the quality of her leadership and management. Supported well by other senior leaders, she has taken decisive steps to strengthen provision and pupils' progress. Accurate and thorough monitoring has led to senior leaders gaining a clear view of where inconsistencies have slowed pupils' learning. In addition, close attention has been paid to improving pupils' progress in areas of need. Additional activities, small group and one-to-one sessions have

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led to the acceleration of a few more able pupils' progress. Even so, this improvement has not yet been translated into improved standards at the end of Year 6.

The school's provision and pupils' progress as well as its overall effectiveness have fallen since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, the school's capacity to improve is judged satisfactory because of recent improvements. There has been an improvement in the monitoring of teaching and learning which has enabled senior staff to develop a good understanding of the impact of recently introduced initiatives. These are beginning to impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching and learning to good levels by:
 - ensuring that activities provide a suitable level of challenge, particularly for the more able pupils
 - embedding the good programme of improvement for writing across all classes in Years 3-6
 - strengthening pupils' application of their mathematical knowledge in practical investigations.
- Improve the levels of pupils' behaviour, particularly in Years 5 and 6 by:
 - ensuring that the school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently
 - finding ways of providing even more intensive support, when needed, for individual pupils.
- Improve provision and children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - developing the outdoor learning spaces to ensure that all areas of learning are effectively covered
 - ensuring that staff's questioning promotes extended answers from children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Though learning is improving as a result of recent actions, it is variable, slower in writing and mathematics and in Key Stage 2. Some good learning was seen as a result of challenging activities. For example, in a good Year 4 science lesson, pupils made good progress in planning an investigation because the teacher left the pupils to decide what question they wanted to resolve when studying friction. They discussed their ideas well, and successfully devised investigations. In reading, pupils make consistently good progress and attainment is above average. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their targets and reach average standards in both English and mathematics. There is no difference in the long term progress of pupils of different genders or backgrounds. All abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress overall but there are variations. Learning of more able pupils sometimes slows when they are not fully challenged. That of pupils with behavioural,

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emotional and social difficulties slows when they do not receive a fully consistent approach to their behaviour.

Pupils enjoy school and almost all have good attitudes to their learning. In most classes pupils behave well. They are generally articulate and confident in answering questions. They enjoy the many opportunities that are provided for them to take responsibility such as through the influential school council, buddying younger pupils or being members of the eco council. Contributions to the local and wider communities are developed well. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle; this is promoted well and was recognised through the gaining of Healthy School status. By the time that they reach the end of Year 6 most though not all, pupils are confident and have well-developed social skills. They are prepared appropriately for their next steps in education and life beyond.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Work is broadly matched to pupils' learning needs, and is based on accurate assessments of pupils' progress. However, on occasion, teachers' planning does not always provide sufficiently challenging activities for pupils, especially the more able and particularly in mathematics. The teaching of mathematics and English is improving and there is an increasing proportion of good teaching. Occasionally, teaching is outstanding such as when a Year 1 class were learning to build descriptive language. The teacher excited the

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pupils by giving an excellent context to the lesson. She then got the pupils to work in pairs to try to identify suspects who were stealing treats from her garden from a long list and to prepare a description so that the police could identify the culprit. The pace of learning was rapid, objectives made clear and the 'steps to success', which helped to structure the pupils' thinking, enabled them to achieve outstandingly well. Learning support staff provide good support for individuals and small groups of pupils. They are effective in providing encouragement and learning support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and they ensure that these pupils make satisfactory progress.

The curriculum is organised effectively and teachers link subjects together well using a topic approach that motivates pupils. Its content is pitched broadly at the right level to meet pupils' needs, but until recently has provided limited focus on problem solving, application of knowledge and more independent work. Themed weeks such as those for art, science and food technology enhance learning well. The pupils enjoy a very good range of extra-curricular activities which focus particularly on sports and the arts.

Good levels of pastoral support ensure that there is sensitive support for pupils and families whose challenging circumstances may make them vulnerable. The 'key workers', for example provide good quality mentoring to pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties although their deployment does not always focus on the pupils who have most need. A number of parents or carers made positive comments about the good quality before and after school care provided by 'Funky Kids'. Pupils attending these well-organised sessions thoroughly enjoy the good range of activities provided for them. The school also benefits from a close liaison that has been established with the nearby children's centre.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has begun to instilled a sense of purpose and ambition in the staff. As a result a collective vision for the school and a commitment to improve provision and to accelerate pupils' progress is developing. This is aided by teachers with responsibility making a strong contribution to the school's self-evaluation procedures and the recent move for these staff to be working in teams has brought benefits as staff share these responsibilities together. However, planning for improvement has not been effective over much of the period since the last inspection. There is now an appropriate development plan being devised with expectations that are sufficiently high to secure satisfactory, and improving, progress for pupils. Teaching and learning are led well, as shown by the current rapid improvements. Staff have a good relationship with parents and

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carers and efforts to involve them in their children's education are successful. The school enjoys good partnerships with other schools and makes effective use of the range of professional services available to them particularly in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Governance is good. The governing body is well organised, and governors share senior leaders' commitment to further improvement. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and, as in the case of regulatory requirements for safeguarding pupils and vetting staff, they sometimes exceed them by adopting recommended good practice. Community cohesion is promoted effectively. The school has close links with a local Jewish school which successfully broaden pupils' horizons and help them to understand a contrasting culture. In addition, good links with the local groups, such as that with the local Rotary club, means that the school plays an important part in the local community. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school promotes equal opportunities adequately. This is improving as the difference in progress made by different groups of pupils narrows.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's progress is satisfactory. Staff have warm and positive relationships with the children and this ensures that they settle quickly and well, that their social and emotional development is promoted effectively and that children become secure and confident. Their social development is also promoted well because the staff ensure that there are many opportunities for children to make choices for themselves and to play and learn in small groups. Generally activities are well-chosen to support children's learning across all the required areas. They particularly enjoy the good teaching of letters and sounds. Assessments are used appropriately to ensure that the planned activities provide sufficient

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challenge for children. However, some opportunities are missed to enhance learning because adults' questioning does not always give opportunities for children to extend their expressive language. An appropriate balance is provided between activities that are directed by the adults and those that the children choose for themselves. Outdoor areas are spacious and generally staff provide suitable activities to promote learning in the outside spaces. However, particularly in the Reception area, these do not always suitably promote learning across all aspects of the curriculum.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A much higher percentage than usual returned the questionnaires. Views were generally positive with most saying that they are happy with the experiences that the school provides for their children. Many parents and carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage commented on how well their children settle into school and how much they appreciate the good relationships that these staff have with their children. Although almost all respondents said that their children enjoy school, a significant proportion said that the school does not deal well with unacceptable behaviour. The behaviour of some pupils in the upper part of the school means that overall behaviour is satisfactory even though most pupils behave well. The school is keenly aware of this issue and they are tackling it appropriately. Many parents and carers applauded the acting headteacher's actions to diminish this weaker behaviour and they recognise that there are improvements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shenley Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 169 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 336 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	111	66	52	31	5	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	103	61	64	38	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	33	98	58	15	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	28	99	59	11	7	10	6
The teaching is good at this school	61	36	96	57	6	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	40	81	48	18	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	45	88	52	4	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	60	36	92	54	7	4	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	34	92	54	10	6	7	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	22	92	54	29	17	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	32	98	58	9	5	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	63	37	86	51	11	7	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	76	45	78	46	10	6	4	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shenley Primary School, Shenley, WD7 9DX

I am writing to thank you for your help when we came to inspect your school and also to tell you what we found. Thank you for talking with us. We think you are really lucky to have such spacious grounds to play in!

Yours is a satisfactory school, which means that some things are done well and other things could be improved. You told us that you enjoy school. You also told us that almost all pupils behave well but the behaviour of some is off-putting to you. We agree and think your behaviour is satisfactory overall. However, it was perfect during assembly and when you came into school after break and lunchtime. Like your parents and carers, we think you are happy and feel safe. Your teachers try hard to make lessons interesting for you, and lessons are satisfactory with some being good. But in some lessons the work is too easy for you, particularly those of you that find learning easy, and this means that you do not achieve as well as you could. You told us that you enjoy all the trips and visits that you make, and also your residential visit. These things help to make sure that you enjoy learning. The staff look after you well and take good care of you.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to take some action to make sure that improvements continue. We have asked them to make sure that your teachers give you work that challenges you, particularly for those of you that find learning easy. We have asked them to continue to focus on improving your writing skills. Even though your calculation and mathematical knowledge is good, we have asked the teachers to make sure that you have more chances to apply them in practical mathematics problems. Next, we have asked that more support is given to the pupils who need it to help to improve their behaviour so that it doesn't stop others' learning. Finally, we have asked for some improvements for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. We have asked staff to make sure that when they question the children, they make sure that you give much longer answers. We have also asked for the staff to make sure that activities in the outdoor spaces always cover all the required areas of learning.

We hope that you continue to enjoy school and learning.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector

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